

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Report:
Suzie's Ridge
COF-020-088

Section 201 of FLPMA requires the BLM to maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values, which includes wilderness characteristics. It also provides that the preparation and maintenance of the inventory shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands. Regardless of past inventory, the BLM must maintain and update as necessary, its inventory of wilderness resources on public lands. In some circumstances conditions relating to wilderness characteristics may have changed over time, and an area that was once determined to lack wilderness characteristics may now possess them. BLM Manual 6310 'Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands' provides the guidance on conducting this inventory process.

Following BLM guidance the Royal Gorge Field Office conducted an inventory in 2013 and found the 2830.7 acre unit did not meet the criteria for having wilderness characteristics. Per policy, the public has the opportunity to provide new information regarding wilderness characteristics that the BLM must evaluate and consider. New information that meets the minimum standard for further review was submitted by Wild Connections on May 6, 2015 contending that the unit did in fact meet the criteria. This report reflects an updated inventory that combines BLM's 2013 findings and an evaluation of the data submitted by Wild Connections.

Inventory Effort	Acreage Inventoried	Wilderness Characteristics Acreage
BLM 2013 Inventory	2,830.7	0
Wild Connections Inventory Grape Creek Contiguous	2,830.7 (approximate)	2,830.7 (approximate)
BLM 2015 Evaluation Conclusions	2,923.7	2,785.1

Form 1: Document Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings on Record (Refers to Original 1980's Inventory Effort)

Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

NO (If no, go to Form 2)

YES X If yes, and if the area has subunits within the broader area, list the unique identifiers for each of those subunits:

Inventory Source: 1980 Wilderness Study Report

Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s): 310 001

Map Name(s)/Number(s):

BLM District(s)/Field Office(s): Front Range District/ Royal Gorge Field Office

BLM Inventory findings on record: Document existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Document BLM Wilderness Characteristics Findings on Record (Historic Findings)					
Inventory Source Document:					
Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? (YES/NO & acres)	Naturalness (YES/NO)	Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude (YES/NO)	Outstanding opportunities for primitive & unconfined recreation (YES/NO)	Supplemental Values? (YES/NO)
CO-050-014	Y	N	N	N	N

(add rows as needed)

Form 2: Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: COF-020-088, Suzie's Ridge

Total Acreage: 2,923.7 acres

1. Is the area of sufficient size? :

Yes X No

The land is smaller than 5,000 acres. The land also adjoins the BLM Lower Grape Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (managed by the Royal Gorge Field Office BLM). In 2013, the inventory concluded that the unit did not meet the size exception 2.a.ii. because it is not contiguous. The 2015 inventory reviewed the definition as outlined in the BLM Manual 6310. Contiguous lands have a common boundary and having a common corner is not contiguous. Suzie's Ridge has a common boundary of 0.78 miles that continues with a state land boundary. Although state land is not included in acreage determination, the unit does share a common boundary with the WSA. Therefore the BLM concurs with Wild Connections new information that the unit is contiguous with BLM Lower Grape Creek WSA and does meet the size exception 2.a.ii.

The unit is bounded as follows:

- The north east edge is bounded by BLM Lower Grape Creek WSA;
- The north edge is bounded by wilderness inventory road CO-020-023-A;
- The southwest corner is defined by wilderness inventory road, Fremont County Rd 1;
- The southeast corner is bounded by wilderness inventory road, CO-020-023-C;
- The south, west, northeast and southeast edges of the unit are bounded by property lines other than BLM management.

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes X No NA

The unit is located less than a ½ hour drive southwest from Cañon City, CO. Unit COF-020-088 is located on the western edge of Lower Grape Creek WSA. The unit contains 2,923.7 acres of public land.

The majority of the topography is rugged and steep with two large, deep gulches. The central portion of the unit consists of a forested ridge forming Suzie's Ridge. Iron Mountain is located within the unit with its high point at 8,136 feet. The vegetation has pockets of Ponderosa pine mixed with thick piñon-juniper woodlands. The northern portion of the unit opens into a flatter, open area known as Goat Park.

Green Mountain Mine is located within the northeast section of the unit. This private mining parcel is located at the end of WIR CO-020-023-A. The drilling site and timbers are noticeable human impacts in the area surrounding the edge of the private parcel. Wild Connections contends that the mine located in Section 26, T. 19 S. R. 72 W. could

be excluded from the unit and the remainder of the unit would meet the criteria for naturalness. Based on the terrain and the location of the mine which is at a lower elevation within the unit, the mine would not be visible from other places. The mine itself would not impact the overall naturalness of the area but will be cherry stemmed from the unit. The mine area and road access area removed totals 138.6 acres.

Most of the area is too steep for cattle grazing but is within a grazing allotment. Most grazing occurs on the adjoining state land and the private land to the north on Goat Park. In general, the unit has little access, minimal human impacts, primarily affected by the forces of nature and therefore naturalness is prevalent.

3. Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐

There is opportunity for solitude throughout the unit. This can largely be attributed to the steep rugged terrain and heavily vegetated slopes found throughout the unit. Combined with limited access the area sees relatively few visitors.

4. Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☒

The unit provides a variety of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. There are outstanding opportunities for hiking and backpacking within the various drainages found throughout the unit with ample opportunities to explore. Outstanding hunting opportunities exist in the higher elevations of the unit, especially for those willing to hike longer distances.

5. Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes ☒ No ☐ NA ☐

- The unit contains elk severe winter range and mule deer winter range as mapped by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Summary of Analysis:

Unique Identifier: COF-020-088

Acreage with LWC: 2,785.10 acres

Results of Analysis:

Inventory concluded that the 2,785.10 acres adjoin with the BLM Lower Grape Creek WSA; and are contiguous. The lands consist of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive unconfined recreation. The footprint of the private mine parcel and route to the parcel was excluded from the unit.

The unit, COF-020-88, Suzie's Ridge, is bounded as follows:

- The east edge is bounded by BLM Lower Grape Creek WSA;
- The northwest edge is bounded by wilderness inventory road CO-020-023-A, the section of CO-020-023-A in the northeast of the unit will be "cherry stemmed" to include the private land parcel containing the mine;
- The southwest corner is bounded by wilderness inventory road, Fremont County Rd 1;
- The southeast corner is bounded by wilderness inventory road, CO-020-023-C;
- The south, southeast, north east and west edges of the unit are bounded by property lines other than BLM management.
- The legal description is as follows:
 - o T. 19 S. R. 72 W. Sections 26, 27, 33, 34, 35.

- Does the area meet size requirements or exceptions? Yes X No
- Does the area appear natural? Yes X No NA
- Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? Yes X No NA
- Does the area have supplemental value? Yes X No NA

Check one:

 X The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as land with wilderness characteristics.

 The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

This does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision, and does not represent a decision in regard to how the area will be managed or address impacts of management decisions.

Prepared by:

Evaluator: Janine Prout/ Recreation Technician

Date: July 30, 2013

Evaluator: Kalem Lenard/ Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date: July 30, 2013

Evaluator: Matt Rustand/Wildlife Biologist

Date: Sept 11, 2013

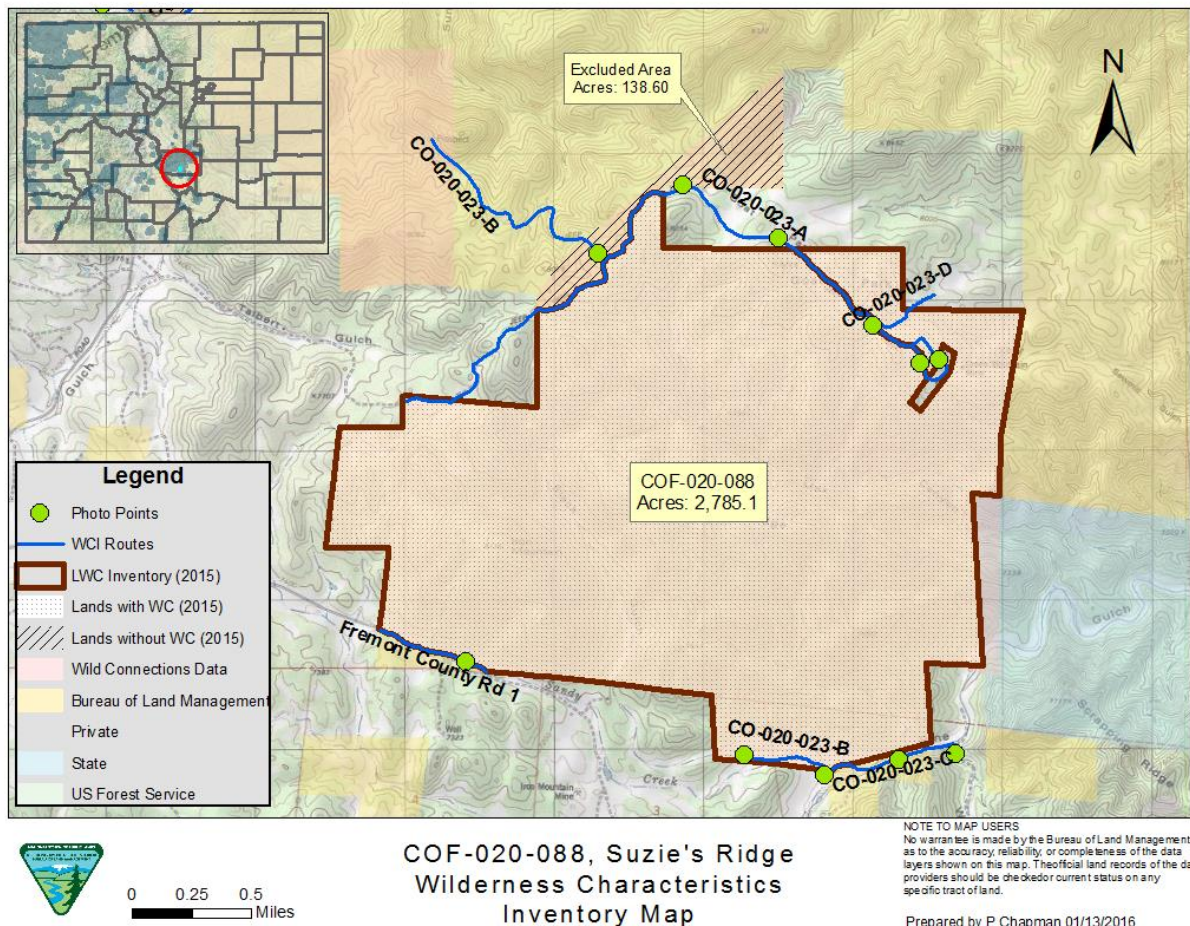
Evaluator: Chris Cloninger/ Rangeland Management Specialist

Date: Sept 11, 2013

Evaluator: Linda Skinner/ Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date: December 29, 2015

Map 1 Suzie's Ridge 2015 inventory with routes and photo points



Form 3: Route Analysis:

The Route Analysis includes factors to consider when determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. For the purposes of this analysis, use the following definition of a “road”. This definition is drawn from and the FLPMA legislative history and historic BLM inventory direction.

Road: An access route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

- a. Improved and maintained – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. “Improved” does not necessarily mean formal construction. “Maintained” does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.
- b. Mechanical means – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.
- c. Relatively regular and continuous use – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

If a portion of a route is found to meet the wilderness inventory road criteria (see Part III) and the remainder does not meet these criteria (e.g., a cherry stem road with a primitive route continuing beyond a certain point), identify each segment and explain the rationale for the separate findings.

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: COF-020-088, Suzie’s Ridge
Route or Route Segment Name and/or Identifier: CO-020-023-A, Fremont County Road 1, CO-020-023-C

I. LOCATION:

Refer to attached map and BLM corporate data (GIS). List photo point references (where applicable) or reference attached photo log:

Map Title: Unit COF-020-088, Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Map

Map Date: 2013

Describe:

The map shows the parcel inventoried for wilderness characteristics and routes collected by GPS.

II. ROUTE CONTEXT

The purpose of a route is not a deciding factor in determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. The purpose of a route does provide context for factors on which such a determination may be based, particularly the question of whether maintenance of the route ensures relatively regular and continuous

use. The purpose also helps to determine whether maintenance that may so far have been unnecessary to ensure such use would be approved by BLM when the need arises.

A. Current Purpose of Route:

- CO-020-023-A: the current purpose is for private inholding access and BLM administrative access.
- CO-020-023-C: The current purpose is for a private access.
- Fremont County Road 1: The current purpose is for general transportation.

B. Right-of-Way (ROW):

B.1. Is there a ROW associated with this route?

Yes X No Unknown

If yes, what is the stated purpose of the ROW?

B.2. Is the ROW still being used for this purpose?

Yes No Unknown or N/A X

- CO-020-023-A: has a ROW associated with it through Fremont County, it is unknown if the road has been abandoned by Fremont County, serial # C 44142.
- CO-020-023-C: has a ROW associated with it, COC53191, the ROW is currently in use.
- Fremont County Road 1: has a ROW associated with it through Fremont County, it is currently used by Fremont County, serial # C 44142.

III. WILDERNESS INVENTORY ROAD CRITERIA

A. Is there evidence of construction or improvement using mechanical means?

Yes, if either III.A.1 *or* III.A.2 is checked "yes" below X

No, if both III.A.1 *and* III.A.2 are checked "no" below

A.1. Construction: Is there evidence that the route or route segment was originally constructed using mechanical means?

Yes X No

- CO-020-023-A: has evidence of mechanical construction; evidence of cut/fill is on the hill sides.
- CO-020-023-C: has evidence of mechanical construction, possibly bladed.
- Fremont County Road 1: has evidence of mechanical construction, bladed and graveled.

A.2. Improvements: Is there evidence of improvements using mechanical means to facilitate access?

Yes X If "yes", improvements by? Hand Tools X by Machine X

No

- CO-020-023-A: has evidence of hand tool use to clear vegetation from the route.
- CO-020-023-C: has evidence of mechanical improvements such as adding culverts, and drainage crossings.
- Fremont County Road 1: has evidence of mechanical improvements such as roadside berms, drainage, and culverts.

B. Maintenance: Is there evidence of maintenance that would ensure *relatively* regular and continuous use?

Yes, if either III.B.1 *or* III.B.2 is checked "yes" below X

No, if both III.B.1 *and* III.B.2 are checked "no" below X

B.1. Is there evidence or documentation of maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes X If "yes", maintenance by? Hand Tools by Machine X

- CO-020-023-C: has evidence of mechanical maintenance on route.
- Fremont County Road 1: has evidence of mechanical maintenance on route.

B.1. No X

- CO-020-023-A: No recent maintenance was observed.

B.2. If the route or route segment is in good condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved by BLM to meet the purpose(s) of the route in the event this route became impassable? "Good condition" would be a condition that ensures regular and continuous use relative to the purposes of the route. Consider whether the route can be clearly followed in the field over its entire course and whether all or any portion of the route contains any impediments to travel.

Yes X No

Explain:

- CO-020-023-A: BLM would maintain route if became impassable due to administrative access designated in the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (2006).
- CO-020-023-C: ROW holder would maintain route if became impassable.
- Fremont County Road 1: Fremont County would maintain route if became impassable.

C. Relatively regular and continuous use: Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?

Yes X

Explain: Describe evidence (e.g., direct: vehicles or vehicle tracks observed; or indirect: evidence of use associated with purpose of the route such as maintenance of facility that route accesses) and other rationale for whether use has occurred and will continue to occur on a *relatively* regular basis (regular and continuous use relative to the

purpose(s) of the route). Include estimate of travel rates for the stated purposes (e.g., trips per day, week, month, season, year, or even multiple years in some facility maintenance cases).

- CO-020-023-C: has continuous use, possibly 20 times per day.
- Fremont County Road 1: has continuous use, possibly 40-60 times a day.

C. Relatively regular and continuous use: Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?

No X

- CO-020-023-A: is closed to public access due to no legal access from private property. The route has use 10-15 times a month.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Does the route or route segment meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A *and* III.B *and* III.C all checked yes)? If part of the route meets the wilderness inventory road definition and the remainder does not, describe the segment meeting the definition and any remaining portion not meeting the definition and why. Also, describe and explain rationale for any discrepancies with citizen proposals.

Yes X = Wilderness Inventory Road

No = Not a road for wilderness inventory purposes

Explain:

- CO-020-023-A is a wilderness inventory route, due to the associated ROW, and designated BLM administrative access.
- CO-020-023-C: is a wilderness inventory route, due to the associated ROW.
- Fremont County Road 1: is a wilderness inventory route, due to the associated ROW and regular and continuous use.

Evaluator: Janine Prout/ Recreation Technician

Date: July 30, 2013

PHOTO LOG

Photographer(s): **Janine Prout/ Recreation Technician**

Inventory Area Unique Identifier: **COF-020-088**

Date	Frame #	Camera Direc.	Description	GPS/UTM Location	Township	Range	Sec.	Photo Point #
6/6/2013	DSC03633	E	Cattle guard	See map	20 S	72 W	2	1
6/6/2013	DSC03641	E	Route Condition	See map	20 S	72 W	2	2
6/6/2013	DSC03642	E	Route Condition	See map	20 S	72 W	3	3
6/6/2013	DSC03644	NW	Route Condition	See map	19 S	72 W.	33	4
6/6/2013	DSC03645	N	Typical view of the unit from the south	See map	19 S	72 W.	33	5
6/20/2013	DSC03675	NE	Beginning of route	See map	19 S	72 W.	26	6
6/20/2013	DSC03676	NE	Beginning of route	See map	19 S	72 W.	26	7
6/20/2013	DSC03677	S	Drill Site	See map	19 S	72 W.	26	8
6/20/2013	DSC03685	W	Milled Beams	See map	19 S	72 W.	26	9
6/20/2013	DSC03688	N	Scenic view	See map	19 S	72 W.	22	10



#1, Route condition, Cattle guard



2, Route condition



#3, Route COndition



#4, Fremont County Road condition



#5, Typical view of the route



#6, beginning of route



#7, beginning of route



#8, Drilling site



#9, Milled lumber



#10, Scenic View

Royal Gorge Field Office Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory, 2015: Evaluation of new information

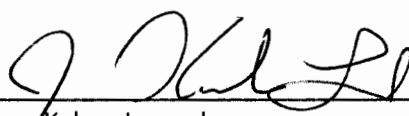
Assessment and Determination

The BLM Royal Gorge Field Office followed manual 6310 in the performance of inventory for lands with wilderness characteristics. In response to new information submitted in May, 2015 by Wild Connections, the 2013 inventory was re-evaluated. A final review was made by comparing existing data and when needed additional field trips were taken to collect data by GPS, inventory forms, and photo points. Resource specialists were also consulted to determine if the conclusion reached in the 2013 inventory remains valid, or whether changes should occur. The above report documents those findings for the following area(s):

Unit ID	Unit Name	Total BLM acreage inventoried	Acreage with Wilderness Characteristics	Acreage without Wilderness Characteristics
COF-020-088	Suzie's Ridge	2,923.7	2,785.1	138.6


Review:

I have reviewed the inventory results, reports, photos, and maps for the above Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and concur with the findings as submitted.



James Kalem Lenard
Outdoor Recreation Planner, Royal Gorge Field Office

Date: 2/22/16



Keith E. Berger
Field Manager
Royal Gorge Field Office

Date: 2/24/16